

THE JESSE JAMES STORIES

A WEEKLY DEALING WITH THE DETECTION OF CRIME

Issued Weekly. By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at New York Post Office by STREET & SMITH, 238 William St., N. Y.

No. 48.

545 JEFFERSON ST.

Price, Five Cents.

THE JAMES BOYS' STEAMBOAT

OR
THE RIVER CRUISE OF THE BANDIT BROTHERS



"BACK TO YOUR KENNELS, EVERY ONE OF YOU," CALLED JESSE JAMES, "OR I'LL SMASH YOUR TOWN."

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THE JAMES BOYS' STEAMBOAT;

OR,

The River Cruise of the Bandit Brothers.

By W. B. LAWSON.

CHAPTER I.

THE MASKED UNKNOWN.

It was a startling proposal and thrilled the vast crowd to the heart—an unknown man had stepped to the front and volunteered to take the place of Kilrain, who had been drugged on the eve of his great fight with the far-famed Maloney.

The audience was wild with excitement at the daring offer of the unknown.

There was to be a fight after all, and one to which zest was given by the fact that no one could tell who or what the stranger might be.

That was the thrilling charm of the situation.

The suspense of the moment was trying on the strongest nerves.

The big amphitheatre which had been constructed especially for the Maloney-Kilrain fight began to fill up early in the afternoon, although the fight was not to commence until after nine o'clock.

Men were there from every State in the Union, who had come, some of them, thousands of miles to see the big fight.

All classes of people were in the crowd gathered about the ring.

Bank presidents, lawyers and brokers, card sharpers, border ruffians and crooks of every description.

At seven o'clock the big inclosure was packed to its utmost capacity. Every seat was filled and thousands of standing spectators filled the aisles and the space behind the seats.

A preliminary bout between two local lightweight boxers was on the programme, but the crowd cared little for that.

The boxers appeared, the lights over the ring were lit up, and they commenced their bout; but little attention was paid to them. Everybody about the

ringside was thinking of the big fight that was to follow.

"Eight to ten on Maloney!" shouted a burly man, with a red waistcoat, brandishing in one hand a bunch of greenbacks.

"I'll cover a thousand of your money," said a slim stranger, with a confident air.

"Done!" shouted the big man.

"I'll take another thousand o' that there green, pard," said a lanky borderman, drawing a well-filled wallet from his pocket.

"Don't yer do it, Tom," said another borderman, laying his hand on the shoulder of the first. He spoke to him for a few moments in an undertone.

"I'll back water on that 'ere bet, stranger," said Tom. "My friend here tells me that Tom Kilrain has been drugged. I ain't goin' to bet my good money on a fighter with dope in him."

"Two to one on Maloney!" bellowed the big man. But he found few people who were willing to bet with them.

Somehow, the rumor was circulated in the crowd that Kilrain had been drugged.

The odds in betting changed rapidly.

From ten to eight on Maloney they fell steadily until scarcely any one could be found to take the small end of the purse.

The preliminary bout was now over. The great throng in the amphitheatre had assembled to see the fight between Kilrain and Maloney.

Now it looked as if they had been tricked. If Kilrain had been drugged how could he be expected to fight?

Angry murmurs began to come from all parts of the big building.

It was past the time scheduled for the big bout. The throng was impatient.

Now the building was filled with a storm of hisses.

Now it was shaken with the thunder of thousands of stamping feet.

"We've been skinned out of our money!" yelled a middle-aged man near the ringside.

"It's a robbery! Smash the seats! Lynch the manager!" came from a score of voices at once.

The hubbub was terrible.

The cordon of blue-coated policemen gathered about the twenty-four-foot ring rose to their feet and grasped their clubs firmly. Some of them felt ner-

vously at their hip pockets to see if their revolvers were in place.

They expected that there would be plenty of work for them to do.

Suddenly when the din was at its highest a man climbed into the ring.

After a few moments he succeeded in making himself heard above the racket.

"From some unknown reason," he shouted, "Kilrain is ill and cannot fight this evening. It looks as if he had been poisoned. We are doing all we can to find out who poisoned him. We have also taken care that you shall see the fight for which you paid tonight."

"A stranger who appeared here suddenly has volunteered to take Kilrain's place. He refuses to say who he is, although he says that he is well known here. He wears a mask and refuses to set it aside when he enters the ring. Whether he is a match for Maloney or not you may judge for yourselves."

As the speaker concluded a broad-shouldered man, enveloped in a long cloak, entered the ring, followed by several seconds, and took his seat in the chair in one corner. The upper part of his face was effectually concealed by a black mask. Beyond the fact that he was clean-shaven, and that his hair was cropped closely, after the manner of prize fighters, little could be discovered about his appearance.

"Who was he?" That was the question uttered by thousands of lips that night. If there was anybody in the enclosure who could answer it, he remained silent.

A moment later the gigantic Maloney entered the ring, followed by his seconds.

There was a tremendous burst of applause as the fighters threw off their outer garments and stood up stripped for action, while the gloves were examined and adjusted on their hands.

As they stood for a moment receiving the instructions of the referee they afforded a good chance for the spectators to compare their physical characteristics.

Maloney, bulky and muscular, towered several inches over the head of the masked unknown.

The stranger, however, looked to be a dangerous opponent. Though not as heavy as Maloney, he was nearly as broad. His muscles were well laid, and he appeared to be as quick in his movements as a cat.

His mouth and chin—the only part of his face left uncovered—wore an expression of bulldog determination.

He looked as though he did not lack for sand.

"The big fellow will eat him up," said a gayly-attired city sport, who had journeyed all the way across the continent from New York to see the big fight.

"Wait, my son," said an old ranger, "that thar stranger with the mask is a hefty-lookin' critter."

But now the bell rang.

The two fighters stood face to face.

Maloney came forward confidently to the position of a trained boxer.

The masked unknown slouched forward, in a crouching position. His movements were like those of a panther about to spring.

"Crack!" Like a flash he had darted at Maloney, striking with left and right. The big man's fists shot out like lightning. There was a moment of in-fighting so rapid that the eye could not follow the blows.

Then the men were locked in a clinch. When the referee parted them there were two red spots on Maloney's ribs that showed where the stranger had landed.

The big man seemed a little shaken up. He kept a respectable distance from the unknown. It seemed to be his intention to take every advantage of his immense reach and wear out his smaller opponent with long left-hand jabs.

The unknown still maintained his crouching position. He continually moved toward the bigger man, who, jabbing at him with his left, moved back to avoid him.

In a moment Maloney had backed into a corner.

The unknown sprang forward, paying no attention to the blows with which the other man tried to stop him.

He swung heavily with left and right.

If either blow had landed on Maloney's jaw it would have been a knockout.

But the big man was a clever boxer. He slipped to one side, and the blows landed on his side and shoulder.

A moment later he was in the middle of the ring, the unknown following him up as closely as ever.

CHAPTER II.

THE UNKNOWN UNMASKED.

Before another blow was struck the bell rang, and the fighters resumed their seats in opposite corners of the ring.

The crowd which had been held quiet by the great nervous tension broke into a deafening roar of applause that fairly shook the building.

This stranger who had taken Kilrain's place to fight for the twenty-thousand-dollar purse was a good man. He was aggressive, as strong as a bull and as quick as a cat.

It looked as though Maloney had met his match and the spectators roared with delight.

Again the fighters faced each other.

Their tactics were the same as before. The stranger crouched forward always on the aggressive, while Maloney moved away from him, striking at him at long range.

These blows, which would have crushed an ordinary man to the ground, seemed unnoticed by the unknown. Sometimes he brushed them aside and sometimes he received them on his arms or shoulders.

Again the unknown rushed with a vicious left swing.

Maloney ducked it, but ran into a right-hand upper cut that rocked his head back.

He staggered.

To avoid falling, he clinched with his smaller opponent and tried to beat him to the ground with his great weight.

The referee rushed in to separate the men, while the crowd went wild with excitement.

Never had any one present seen a fight to equal this.

On the breakaway Maloney landed a straight right that shook up the stranger considerably.

For a moment he hesitated. Then he rushed again, head down.

His left and right struck the big man's ribs and made him stagger.

The unknown was following him closely.

Again he rushed. This time he ran into a straight left, backed up by all the weight of Maloney's immense frame.

The blow landed on his cheek bone.

The unknown staggered back. A tiny stream of blood appeared beneath the black mask.

The uproar was so tremendous that the fighters did not hear the gong. It was not until their seconds entered the ring and dragged them to their corners that they realized that the round was over. The sympathy of the spectators was all with the stranger—the smaller man, although many had backed Maloney to win with every cent they possessed.

"It seems to me that figure's familiar to me," said an old rancher as he removed his cow puncher's hat to wipe the perspiration from his brow.

"I'd like ter see his mask raised," said his companion; "he's a good man whoever he is. He's goin' ter get licked, though. Maloney's too heavy fer him."

"Is he goin' to get licked!" yelled the rancher, waving his hand in the air. "Great snakes! Look at that."

The unknown had rushed from his corner at the sound of the gong like a whirlwind.

All his vitality had evidently come back to him and he rushed at his opponent with indescribable fury.

Maloney was a clever boxer, and blocked and ducked a great many of the blows, but the strength and speed of the stranger were wonderful.

Regarding a shower of blows no more than so many flakes of snow, he rushed under the big man's guard.

The movements of the men were so quick as to bewilder the spectator. Now they struck furiously at each other, now they swung from side to side as they strained in a clinch.

When the bell rang the perspiration poured from both men in torrents. A stream of blood still found its way beneath the black mask. The unknown, however, refused to allow the mask to be lifted for a moment.

A second who tried to lift it in order to clean the wound below it received a blow on the arm that left a bruise there for weeks.

Again the gong rang and again the fighters faced each other.

Maloney was clearly nervous about getting within range of the crouching black-masked figure before him.

The unknown still maintained his aggressive tac-

tics. Another rush and Maloney was flung against the ropes, bleeding from a wound on the lips.

Back he sprang at his antagonist.

His right and left shot out with the velocity of cannon balls.

But the unknown was out of reach, and they struck only the air.

Again Maloney led. He landed on the stranger.

The unknown rushed forward.

This time the big man ducked under his swinging arms and planted a vicious right on his ribs as he made his escape from the corner into which he had been driven.

His blow evidently weakened the unknown.

His limbs trembled visibly as he again moved toward his opponent.

Maloney, judging the distance perfectly, sent out a left and right.

They both landed full on the stranger's head. He staggered for a moment and then fell to his knees.

It looked as though the fight were over.

The din in the enclosure was deafening, but it increased in volume as the unknown rose to his feet again.

He gathered his strength together for one last effort and launched himself at his opponent.

"Crack!"

His left landed full on Maloney's mouth. The big fellow's head rocked back. He staggered and was clinging to the ropes as the gong rang.

"It's anybody's fight now," said one of two detectives who sat by the ringside.

"Yes, and that man puzzles me," said the other. "His face is familiar to me. I can't place it yet. It gives me an unpleasant feeling. I wish I could unmask him."

"I'll try it when the fight's over," said the other. "But look, they are starting again."

The unknown came out of his corner with his old crouching position.

Maloney wore a look of rage in his face.

He rushed forward, swinging with his left.

The stranger slipped beneath it and planted his left straight in the big man's wind.

The fight was over.

Maloney toppled to the ground, trying in vain to rise as the referee counted him out.

Meanwhile the unknown had slipped into a dark

coat and trousers, and pulled a slouch hat over his brow.

He still wore the black mask.

Amid a dinlike pandemonium the referee handed over to him the twenty thousand dollars he had won, in a satchel.

"Who is he? Unmask him! Tell us who he is!"

This cry came from a thousand throats.

From among the cordon of police a dark figure sprang into the ring.

Going straight to the stranger he pulled the mask from his face.

"Jesse James, the outlaw!"

This cry arose on all sides as men gazed into the stern face of the man who at that time had terrified the whole West.

The outlaw sprang hastily from the ring, drawing a revolver as he did so.

Crack! Crack!

Two men, who had rushed to intercept him, with weapons drawn, fell dead. A long lane opened before the outlaw as the people rushed to avoid his deadly revolver.

A moment later and he was out.

All knew what those revolvers, in the hands of Jesse James, could do.

The crowd did not care to press upon him and thus force him to open fire.

If he had just fought and won a fierce fight with the great Maloney with fists, he was ready to run against odds with revolvers.

If they could corner him, with horses ready for them, they might risk something for the sake of the reward on the head of Jesse James; but otherwise—not for them.

CHAPTER III.

THE SECRET WORKERS.

It seemed that every man and boy in the river town had gone to see the great fight.

Those who had not done so were the women and small children, and the sick.

The night was a stormy one, and with no one abroad to buy, the stores were all closed up.

But there were a few who did not go to the scene of the great fight.

Those few were five in number, and they had ridden into the town, and came from the river.

A small steamboat had glided up to the landing and cast out a line and a gang-plank.

The lights from the scene of the fight shone brightly in the eyes of the boatman, but over in the town all was dark and gloomy.

The lights on the steamboat were shaded, and there was an evident desire on the part of the crew not to attract attention to the coming in of the river craft.

If this was contrary to the general custom, it was done for some secret purpose known only to the captain and his crew.

Soon after the gangway had been run ashore as noiselessly as possible, from the interior shadows of the boat rode five mounted men.

The deck had sand upon it so as to give back no sound to the iron-shod hoofs of the horses.

The gang-plank was carpeted.

The five horsemen rode ashore, the leader making a remark in a low tone about the shouts and cheers that rolled away from the scene of the prize fight in an almost continuous roar.

Then, calling out to the man in the pilot house, the leader continued:

"Hang by one line, and be ready to cut the gang-plank away if necessary.

"Remember, there are three different parties to get aboard, so don't lose your head and desert any one of them, for that means death to the one that is left."

"I understand, and this dandy plot of the chief shall not fail through act of mine," said a low, distinct voice from the boat's pilot house.

"Good! If we obey orders this will be a red-letter night in our career," the horseman said.

"Yes, if the chief has not bitten off more than he can chew, for he has gone up against a terrible proposition."

"I know, but he took the risk, didn't he?"

"He did that."

"Well, he knows himself as no other man knows him; unless it is one who has tackled him—and the dead."

"Yes, the ghosts could tell; but luck to you, pard, for you haven't got any easy-going job yourself to handle."

"No, but I'll do it, and if Tom here does his work well also, it will be the greatest night of our career, and that will be saying much.

"But we must be off, for that noisy row over yonder may end sooner than we look for, and it is now ncarly nine o'clock."

This conversation between the leader of the horse-men on shore and the man in the darkened pilot-house of the mysterious steamboat had been carried on in low tones.

But there was no one near to listen, save those who had come down on the boat.

Now the horsemen rode away and directly to the town.

At one of the buildings, larger than the others and standing apart, they halted, and three dismounted.

Two of them, one the leader, said:

"You have gone over the field, so know your work, and I will go and do my share of the plot.

"The house is half-a-mile away on the hill, and it may take me an hour; but, if I am delayed and all goes right with you and over in the prize ring, why, pull out and land for me at Walnut Point, six miles down the river—for I'll be there, and my game with me."

"I'll do it, and I've an idea all will go well with all of us."

"If daring and iron nerve count for anything, there will be no failure," and the leader rode away, followed by the man who had remained mounted with him.

It was to the town tavern they went, seeing no one on the way through the deserted streets.

A call bringing no one out, the leader dismounted, opened the door and entered.

The prizefight had drawn all away, save a negro who was asleep on the floor.

The leader, in the light of the two lamps in the office, was shown to be a man of fine athletic form, dressed in corduroy pants stuck in topboots, a velvet sackcoat, neglige white shirt and black slouch hat.

His face was an attractive one—stern, daring and expressive—while his eyes were full of power, and, in rest, had a hunted look, but, when excited, burned with intense feeling.

A gentleman rancher he looked, or he might have been taken for an army officer.

"Ho, Sambo! where is the landlord?" he asked, giving the negro no light touch with his boot to arouse him.

"Lordy! but I was dreamin' ob de debble!" cried the black, quickly rising to his feet, with a scared look.

"Well, your dream is true, for I am the devil, and you must do what I wish, and quickly, if you want a gold piece redhot from hell's mint.

"If you don't, you go back with me."

"What does Marse Debbil want?" asked the negro, in an awed whisper.

"I want a rig to drive up to the home of Judge Chase, and quickly."

"Yes, sah; if de boss were here, he——"

"Where is he?"

Ober at de prizefight, sah—an' whar I wishes I were."

"Well, you act for him, and get me out your best rig, for——"

"I'll go for the boss, sah——"

"I have not time to wait, so do as I tell you."

"Indeed, sah, I jist can't, fer——"

"Indeed, you jist can, for, if you don't, there will be a nigger funeral in this town.

"Here, take your money and out with that team, or this bullet ends your life!"

He had switched out from under his coat as he spoke a revolver, and the negro hesitated no longer, but led the way to the stables.

"I will drive myself, and be back within half-an-hour, so come over to the landing for the team," and away went the man, followed by his comrade leading his horse, and leaving the negro gazing after him, and muttering:

"I wonder ef I did jist right?"

"Waal, I guesses I did, wid dat resolver a-coaxin' me so arnest ter do as I done."

CHAPTER IV.

JESSE JAMES AT BAY.

There was a big price upon his head, dead or alive. No man knew it better than did Jesse James.

It had been tried for time and again, but to the fatal ending of the one who tried it on, rather than to the man the law was willing to pay so much to get possession of.

Jesse James was carrying out a plan—a plot his daring brain had originated and which he had the desperate nerve to venture to put through against all

odds, and with the risks double what the others had to face.

The two men who had sprung forward, weapons in hand, to head him off, had been like bloodhounds on his track.

They thought that they had him foul, without his guns, and made the rush to capture or kill him then and there.

After his desperate fight with the giant Maloney, he certainly must be worn down bodily and mentally, and would be easy game.

Their weapons were cocked and covering him, to pull trigger if he did not throw up his hands at their command.

They were mistaken in their man—that was all.

But their mistake cost them their lives.

Jesse James was armed, and he was lightning on the draw and trigger.

He fired a shot from each revolver, each eye seeming to cover his man with the sight of the revolver.

That act opened a way for the desperate, but cool, man.

It cut what might be called a "wide swath through the center of the crowd."

With a bound, Jesse James had reached the outer door.

Then guns would have rattled merrily, but for the fact that the hunted man turned at bay.

He faced the oncoming mass of humanity, many of whom wanted his life, and wanted it bad, and more of whom would like to get the reward.

At bay, the crowd surged back quickly, tumultuously.

He was not one to fire upon a retreating foe.

Some in the rear fired their weapons—but into the air, not at the man.

They merely wished to chip in their share of noise—to show that they had been in the fray.

But with a sidelong movement from the outer door, Jesse James was in the darkness.

He stood for a few seconds, hesitating, like a hunted stag.

But hesitation there meant death, and his mind was made up.

He bounded along in the deeper shadows of the vast building, then across to some timber and next toward the town landing.

But the wild mob were now out and on the hunt for him.

And more, many who had already left the ring in groups were on their way back into the center of the town.

Upon a group of these men Jesse James happened. They had halted, listening to the wild cries of the mob:

"The masked unknown was Jesse James!"

"Catch the outlaw!"

"Kill him!"

"String him up!"

"No mercy to Jesse James!"

"Shoot him down as you would a mad dog!"

It was dark, and, as has been said, the night was stormy.

But the halted group of men stood looking back toward the still brightly-lighted building and the surging mob.

They saw a form bound from a thicket into the roadway.

The form was between them and the lighted-up building.

He was revealed distinctly; he was running, and from the building.

It must be the fugitive the mob hunted.

It could be no other than Jesse James, the man with a price upon his head, and a big one.

It was a price big enough for a poor man to risk life for.

Instantly the score of voices shouted:

"Jesse James!"

"Kill him!" came the next cry.

To add to their courage, several voices shouted:

"Here he is!"

A wild shout from the mob, and then came the rushing of many feet.

But several shots had been fired full at the crowd.

They found their targets, too.

Dead and dying men were there, and that fact created a diversion in favor of the hunted man.

Each of the score of men sought to dodge death.

Shots were fired rapidly.

But they were fired at random.

The hands that held the revolvers were trembling; they lacked the nerve.

The fugitive had an iron nerve.

It had not deserted him in time of sorest need.

He might be an outlaw, accused of crimes untold, a man hunted as a wild beast might be; but he was brave, bold to desperation, cool as an icicle with

death staring him in both eyes, death skulking at both elbows, and a mob with a rope to hang him at his back.

He did not lose his nerves of steel, but shot to kill, planned to escape, plotted to give the slip to his foes—one man against a thousand.

Right where he had left the thicket was a ditch, into which he dropped just as he had fired.

It was but three feet deep.

That was drop enough for him.

He crawled back to the thicket along the bottom of the ditch.

He sprang up into the shadows of the timber, and his eyes, glowing like coals of fire, seemed to light his way as he bounded along through the darkness, thrusting cartridges into the empty chambers of his revolver as he ran.

He was still free.

He was yet unhurt.

He was ready to again turn at bay and fight it out to a finish.

CHAPTER V.

THE MIDNIGHT MARAUDERS.

While the scene just related was taking place, in all its wild turmoil and fight for life, the three horsemen who had halted in the rear of a large building in the almost deserted town, had set to work with a will to accomplish the task that had brought them there in the darkness and storm.

The man who had left them, their seeming leader, and had gone to the tavern, soon after passed them, yet saw no sign of them, nothing to indicate that they were engaged in lawless work in the shadows of the building, over the front door of which was a sign that read:

A. SKINNER & CO.,
BANK.

"He knows his business," muttered the leader, as he passed in the open wagon, his comrade following and leading his horse.

"He was wise to take cover when he heard the wheels, for he did not know who was coming," he continued, as he drove on to the home of Judge Chase, the place he had selected as the objective point for his blow to fall.

When the rumble of the wheels had died away there was heard a whistle, a glare was visible within

the bank, and two forms appeared there, as shadowy as ghosts in the uncertain light.

Without a man paced to and fro, doing sentinei duty, while the real watchman of the bank had been tempted to desert his post and go to the scene of the prizefight.

He could not believe how any one with good sense would prefer to rob a bank than go to see the Kilrain-Maloney prizefight, upon which hung twenty thousand dollars in good money.

Had the watchman stuck to his post, and sought to do his duty in defending the treasure, his life would doubtless have been sacrificed.

The men within the bank did "know their business," for they had entered the doors without trouble, at least. They were experts in such work. Then they had begun the heavier task of cracking the safe, for that was what they were there for.

They set a drill to work, and, having come as well prepared as though to open the safe at the request of the cashier, they had each and every implement and article needed in their wicked work.

They were cool about it, too, devilishly cool, depending wholly for their protection upon their sentinel without, whose various signals meant much, told them just what to do, just when to put out their light, or to stop noisy work.

With two such experts, the work did not take long; or, that is, an hour of time was sufficient to do it all, in readiness for the supreme act—the blowing open of the massive door in its case of iron, stone and brick.

A signal was then given by the two workmen to the watchman.

It was three sharp whistles.

It mean three words:

"We are ready."

An answering signal came from the watchman.

It was but one whistle.

Upon it they did not act. It meant:

"Hold!"

They waited a full minute.

To those two men that minute must have seemed an hour.

But they showed no impatience while waiting.

They merely got their weapons in a more handy position.

And they also got two stout bags ready for use.

They had come well prepared for the midnight outing.

To get the boodle by quiet methods, if possible; but to get it by foul means if necessary.

To escape without bloodshed, if possible; but to escape red-handed, if necessary to protect their own lives.

The long minute passed away at last.

Then came the signal from their watchman without.

It was three sharp whistles.

This signal read three words.

They were:

"Let her go!"

The two men within the bank understood it well.

They moved from before the safe.

They sought a sheltered spot.

The match had been applied.

A sound like a hissing, angry snake, a flash of fire, and a dull sound, a thud, a report like a muffled gun, and a crash, all in one.

The two men appeared before the safe.

But they waited.

They wanted to hear a signal.

They got it.

Two sharp whistles came, that read:

"All right!"

The dark-lantern flashed upon the broken safe, for the massive door had fallen out of its socket.

One of the men sprang within the six by ten vault.

The work had been well done.

The flashing lantern, like the devil's eye, revealed the piled-up bundles of money, the bags of gold and silver and bonds.

The latter they did not want.

The silver was bulky, and was too hard to carry.

The paper money and the gold they did want.

A slit was made in each bag to see if the contents were yellow or white.

Quickly the two stout bags brought along received the contents selected for the taking along.

They were thrown over the backs of the two men, who made their way out of the building, met their pal, who handed the bags up to them after they had mounted.

Then he, too, leaped into his saddle.

"A clean haul," said one of the safe-crackers.

"Good! Much boodle there?"

"Yes, and, as old Skinner robbed others of it, he

cannot complain; but they are raising the devil over at the ring."

"Have been for some time, and I guess it's going our way," said the watchman.

"Of course it is—all is!"

"Seen Captain Frank pass back yet?"

"No; but he won't miss."

"Not if he finds the target to shoot at."

"But he must win out, for we have, and the chief over yonder will do so."

"You bet; but hark!"

A shot, and another following quickly, had been heard over at the prize ring.

"There is trouble there!"

"Yes, I guess the chief's been cornered."

"Come, we must push for the boat, and get rid of this stuff; then we can help him."

"Yes, for there is no danger here; the town is like a graveyard."

"And Captain Frank?"

"We cannot desert him. Come, for there is trouble there, and the chief is getting in his fine work," and the three horsemen dashed through the deserted streets directly toward the river landing.

There was visible, like a beacon, a light gleaming from the pilothouse of the mysterious steamboat.

The pilot had set it as a glimmer of hope, a guide to safety to the shore.

The midnight plot was working well—lawlessness against law.

CHAPTER VI.

THE KIDNAPER.

The leader of these midnight marauders ashore, or apparently the one who guided their actions, had gone on his way to the home of Judge Chase, upon the hill beyond the town.

The judge was the "big man" of that community.

He sat in honor on the bench, was the terror of all evildoers, had sent hundreds of men to dwell behind iron bars, and scores to the gallows.

He had been the one to put forth the edict against Jesse James and his daring band, making them outlaws.

He had also influenced the raising of a large sum to put upon the head of Jesse James, dead or alive, and he had himself subscribed one thousand dollars of the liberal reward thus raised.

The judge was a very rich man, and, in addition to his legal duties, he had many "irons in the fire" in a business way.

He owned much real estate in cities where it was valuable, he had interests in mines, stores and cotton ranches, and he held a power that enabled him to do pretty much as he pleased, adjourning court at his pleasure, and sentence the guilty with his own opinion alone to consult.

His particular hobby was his home, and he had made of it an Eden in a wilderness.

He had built a handsome mansion, furnished it extravagantly, had city servants to cater to his wants, and his stables were filled with fine horses and vehicles.

At the time of the arrival of the mysterious steamboat at the landing of the town, on the night of the much-advertised Kilrain-Maloney prizefight, the judge was away from home.

He had been called a week before to the city, and he had taken his wife with him, as she was something of an invalid.

Cherrie Chase, the pretty daughter of the judge, then in her nineteenth year, had been left at home, with the dozen servants it took to run the household.

A girl reared on the border, bright, handsome and fond of outdoor life and sports, Cherrie knew no such word as fear.

She rode as well as a cowboy, shot to dead center with rifle or revolver, could lasso a steer, and was as popular as her father was feared and her stepmother was unpopular, for Mrs. Chase was the judge's second wife, had been his housekeeper, and was wont to put on airs with all who were not rich city folks.

Miss Cherrie Chase was seated in the parlor, singing at the piano, when her mother's maid announced a visitor, for the butler and all of the other male servants had gone to see the great prizefight.

"Who is he, Clara?" asked the young lady.

"He said his name was James Franklin, miss; but that don't tell much; only he's mighty good-lookin'."

"Some one to see my father, doubtless; but ask him to come in."

Clara obeyed, and the one who entered the parlor was the horseman who had so easily persuaded the porter of the tavern to let him have a team to go up to the home of Judge Chase.

He was a striking-looking individual, Cherrie saw

at a glance, while his manners were courtly, as he bowed and said:

"Pardon me for disturbing you, Miss Chase, but I just arrived in a steamer, and your father asked me to call and request that you at once go to the city, to his hotel, as your mother——"

"My stepmother, sir; but is Mrs. Chase ill?"

"Not seriously; but your father has to go East, and wishes you to go to the city and remain with your mother—I mean Mrs. Chase—until his return.

"As I had business in your town, he asked me to deliver the message."

"You are very kind, sir; but when does the boat return?"

"The captain told me that he would await your coming, if you would not delay long."

"It is a bad night, and I really believe that there is not a male servant on the place to get a carriage ready for me, Mr.—Mr.——"

"James Franklin, Miss Chase," said the visitor, and he added:

"I got a rig at the hotel, in which I drove up here, Miss Chase, and if you will accept of my escort I will take you back to the boat."

"You are very kind, Mr. Franklin, and I will accept the courtesy you offer, if you will allow me to detain you for perhaps half-an-hour."

"Certainly, miss."

"And I'll have the housekeeper prepare you some supper, and my father's decanters are well supplied," and Cherrie Chase swept from the room, and the visitor heard her call the housekeeper.

Seating himself at the piano, his face as calm as a May morning, and wholly undisturbed by the danger of delay and the suspense he must suffer, the visitor ran his fingers over the keys with a master touch.

He played softly, and drifted from an instrumental piece into a sweet melody, which he sang in a voice at which Cherrie Chase, in her preparations upstairs, paused to listen.

Then the housekeeper appeared and asked him to walk into the dining-room.

He found there a tempting cold supper, a bottle of wine, and some hot coffee, and enjoyed the meal greatly.

As he finished it Miss Chase appeared, the maid carrying a satchel, and the young lady said:

"My trunk will follow by express, Mr. Franklin, so I am ready, if you are."

"I have much enjoyed my supper, miss, thanks to your hospitality, and you are just on time, for the half-hour is just up."

"Ah! one of my men has returned, I see, and——"

"No; it is a man who came with me as a guide, and to hold my horse. Let me aid you," and, as readily as though she had been a child, he placed her in the vehicle.

"You are a remarkably strong man, Mr. Franklin, for I weigh a hundred and thirty pounds."

"I lead an outdoor life, Miss Chase, and take much exercise."

"Are there not two men there behind us?" she asked, a trifle nervously.

"No, the man has a led horse, for I started to come on horseback, until I thought you might wish to return at once, and would need a carriage."

"You were very thoughtful, sir, and it is well that you were, as the men on the place slipped off to the prizefight held here to-night; but I heard you singing a favorite ballad of mine, and so find you musical."

"I am fond of music——"

"Oh! what is all that noise in the town?"

"The prizefight is doubtless at an end, miss; but have no fear."

"But they are firing, and in this country that means death to some poor man."

"We will try and avoid the crowd, miss, and——"

"But just hear the loud voices and the firing!"

"Why, listen to their words! They are saying that that terrible outlaw, Jesse James, is in town, and must be hanged."

"We will reach the boat, miss, and——"

"The boat is going off, sir! See! the crowd are attacking it!" cried Cherrie, now in wild alarm.

Her companion had driven almost upon the wild crowd, but now drew rein.

He was unmoved, perfectly so, by the uproar, and the glare of many torches revealed his calm face.

He glanced behind him. There was his mounted comrade, very near, and with his horse in lead.

A man passed near, caught sight of the daring companion of Miss Chase, and shouted:

"Ho, men! there is Frank James!"

"Yes, and he is running off with Miss Cherrie Chase!"

A roar of voices went up; but, while a curse broke from the lips of the accused man, he wheeled the horses to the right about with a skillful turn on the reins, and laid the whip upon the backs of the animals with a vigor that sent them flying back into the town.

Behind him came his companion, at breakneck speed, a cry broke from the lips of the girl, and she fainted, while a few reckless men, only anxious to kill the kidnaper, fired after the daring, flying man, as he disappeared in the darkness.

"Keep close up, for we may need the saddle horses."

"The girl has fainted, and now it is a six-mile race to Walnut Point—a race for life," said Frank James, grimly.

CHAPTER VII.

"TO THE BOAT!"

Jesse James eluded the group of men upon whom he had so unexpectedly run in the darkness, and escaped by means of the ditch, which allowed him to reach the shelter of the timber.

Then he made his way down toward the town, to find that the whole howling mob were in full pursuit of him.

He stood a moment in deep thought.

He was alone, and with a whole community against him.

It was a cruel mob he had to face, and mobs are always merciless; they are unthinking.

He had planned a daring, desperate plot, and he had not shrunk from giving to himself the greatest danger rôle to play.

There were three plots in one in reality, and the plans were perfect.

He had taken advantage of the great Kilrain-Maloney fight to play his cards to win.

The boat had been chartered, the game unfolded, his three leading allies let fully into the secret, and the plot revealed and discussed.

The three lieutenants each had a bold and important part to play.

But all must act together.

The captain of the boat had to play his part in a

nervy way, for the lives of all the band hung upon his successfully carrying out his duties.

The kidnaper of the daughter of Judge Chase must play the part of a gentleman, and of a daring abductor as well.

It had been learned that the judge was away from home at the appointed time of the raid, and this was well; but if he was not, the kidnaper was not to be foiled in carrying out his work.

The kidnaping scheme must not fail, and it has been seen that the man sent to carry it to a successful termination was just the right one selected for the work.

Frank was not the man to be easily frightened off or thwarted from his plot.

Then, too, the three men selected for the robbery of the bank were experts in their particular field of work.

They were cool, fearless, not easily rattled, nor could they be frightened out of an undertaking.

The captain of the boat knew his part, and was prepared to perform it.

He had his furnaces at a white heat, his lights all darkened, his crew at their posts, and those who were to do the fighting, if called upon, ready and willing to act—to do or die.

And, thus ready for the night's raid, the boat slipped up the river, and, landing, hung by a single bow line, which a blow from a hatchet would let go, while the man with the hatchet was right there to give the blow when needed.

The ringleader of this midnight marauders' raid, to carry out the three separate plots, had left the boat a couple of miles below the town, while it was wooding up at a woodyard on the river bank.

He had left it just at sunset, going in a light canoe that could be easily paddled.

He had passed by the expectant town just after nightfall, and, keeping close under the shadow of the other shore, had held on until he reached a point above the vast building arranged for the prizefight.

Then he had crossed over at a wooded point, and was greeted with the call of a nightbird, the plaintive note of the whip-poor-will.

He paddled straight in to the bank, and as he stepped ashore a man met him there.

"Well, Curley, I am here," said Jesse James.

"Yes, sir, and on time, too."

"It is a way I have, for good or evil."

"That's no joke, sir, but the boat?"

"Lies below, and will move up when the gang goes to the ring."

"Which they are doing now in droves."

"Many strangers in town?"

"Loads of 'em."

"What kinds mostly?"

"All kinds."

"Who, for instance?"

"Agents from the cattle ranges, and men who back the mines. Then there are cowboys, roughs, toughs, sports, bruisers, gamblers, and all that go to make up a hard crowd, with Injuns and niggers, half-breeds and Chinamen thrown in, the worst of all being the city blokes, for they are always the durndest cutthroats of the lot."

"And the two fighters?"

"One in the pink of fighting trim—in fact, both are ready to put up the fight of their lives, only one will be getting dopy soon."

"Which one?"

"The one that my man, who is clinging closer than a brother to both of 'em, gets a chance to give the dope to, and thus knock him out."

"Good! But there is no other man here they can ring in in place of him?"

"None; it will then be your put; but can you stand the racket, chief, for those men are terrors in a fight?"

"Yes, I can, I will, I must!" said Jesse James, in a way that meant he was determined to win.

"Your man understands just what game to play, and how to play the cards at the right time, as I explained it all?"

"No fear of him, sir, for he's educated."

"Well, that is all I ask, for him to put me on at the right time, and masked."

"He will do it; but what if you should get knocked out, chief?"

"Only death can knock me out, Curley," was the almost fierce reply.

Then in a gentle tone Jesse James asked:

"How about the bank?"

"It is all right, chief, and the watchman will be at the fight."

"And Judge Chase?"

"Is in the city with his wife, and the girl is at home; but you bet all the menservants will be at the

fight; in fact, everybody will be there who can beg, borrow or steal the price."

"Then all goes well, and I thank you.

"Now, I'll put on my disguise and loaf over to the ring, and I'll know your pal when I see him, and how to reach him when the time comes."

"He'll be on the watch for you, chief, if I don't——"

"I wish you to go down the shore and meet the boat."

"I'll miss the fight, and——"

"D—— the fight! You meet the boat and tell Frank all that you have told me.

"Wait on the boat and stay with the pilot, for it may all end in a footrace, or a grave-digging, a shooting or a hanging, and there is too much at stake to take the slightest risk."

"All right, chief; I'll go on the boat, and luck to you."

Jesse James watched the man walk away, down the river, and then, drawing on a long-haired wig and rough beard, he walked over to the prize ring.

The result of his going, his hard-earned battle in the ring, has been seen, as well as his recognition, escape from the building and flight toward the steamboat, for he was unable to reach the spot where he had left his canoe.

Making his way toward the boat, he saw that the pilot had shown one bright light as a beacon, and the vast mob, now in a frenzy, came rushing on.

Had the bank tappers been successful and escaped to the boat? he wondered.

Had Frank kidnaped the daughter of Judge Chase and reached the boat with her in safety?

He, Jesse James, had prolonged the desperate fight in the arena as long as he dared, to give his men all the time for work that he could.

But the end was nigh now, and all depended upon his reaching the boat and quick action.

He was leading well, when suddenly he saw a carriage coming swiftly along from the town.

He glanced back at the crowd, half-halting, as though to stand at bay.

But he realized the utter madness of such an act, and sprang on his way.

"Frank can never make it," he cried, and yet it seemed the only desperate chance, and he sent his trumpet-like voice ringing forth in the command:

"To the boat! To the boat!"

But Frank had lashed the horses forward. He saw, and heard Jesse's order above the roar of voices, and then, in an instant, realized the only thing he could do, and he did it.

He wheeled his team, and drove away like the wind back into the town.

CHAPTER VIII.

A MOB HELD AT BAY.

There was but one thing for Jesse James to do, when he realized that the team could not be forced through the frenzied crowd.

He saw Frank turn about, heard the shots fired at the flying team, and in a voice that rang with fierce denunciation, shouted:

"Cowards!

"You are firing upon a woman!

"Take me for your game!"

They stood silent for a moment, astounded, spell-bound.

In that instant he had halted, controlled the mad spirits.

Then his hands rose to a level with his face, a revolver in the grip of each, and he was again at bay.

Bravely he stepped forward, stride by stride, and with each footfall he pulled trigger.

The crowd was not fully armed.

In fact, only a few had weapons.

Those in the front were mostly lookers-on.

But they knew the deadly aim of Jesse James.

They began to move backward.

Then one, two, three men dropped under the fatal fire of the desperate one brought to bay.

It at once became a wild stampede, as mad as frightened cattle.

The ones in front fled for their lives, forced the others back, and rushed over the crowd in their rear.

They thought only of safety for themselves; escape from those terrible weapons in those steel-nerved hands.

"He is coming!"

"He is shooting to kill!"

"Get out of his way!"

"Fly for your lives!"

"He is rushing us!"

Such were the cries that rose on all sides.

One voice will often cause a panic in a crowd.

It did so then.

The mad gathering scattered like leaves before a gust of wind.

The few who would have stood their ground were powerless to do so.

Those who were armed were unable to use their weapons, though against but one man.

The crowd rushed over them, helter-skelter, knocking many down, forcing all back.

But Jesse James had advanced beyond all thought of caution.

The devil in his nature was aroused to madness, and he continued to follow up the advantage he had gained, though well he knew that it was but temporary.

He knew that the crowd would turn soon, and turn to rend him.

The cool heads, and there were many in the crowd, would master the madcaps but too soon for the good of Jesse James.

Already the reaction had begun.

Jesse James realized only too well that he could not repeat what he had done—not with that crowd.

It thirsted for the large reward upon his head.

There were gamblers there willing to stake life to win thousands of dollars.

They wanted the life, the head, of Jesse James.

They were reward-crazed.

But the defiant man had temporarily checked the pursuit of Frank and the kidnaped girl.

Having done this, he turned to seek safety for himself.

Thus far no one connected him with the steamboat that lay so silent and mysterious not a hundred yards away.

Now, he retreated toward the boat, and bounded along swift as a deer.

But he halted, for in the babel of voices he heard one say:

"After the kidnaper of Cherrie Chase!

"The judge will pay big money for his girl's return.

"And we'll get her kidnaper."

These words told Jesse James that he must not linger there.

But where were the bank tappers?

He asked himself the question, and added:

"They must not be deserted!"

As he uttered the words a wild shout arose back in the crowd.

There came a voice:

"There is Jesse James!

"Follow me, men, and he is ours!"

There was a familiar ring in the voice.

Jesse James thought that he recognized it.

Then he saw three horsemen dart into view, revealed by the glare of a score of pine torches.

"There they come now!"

"It is a grand bluff to get here in safety," said the man, calmly.

The crowd bit at the bluff of the leader of the bank tappers.

They saw only three daring men coming from the town, mounted and well armed, and willing to risk life in an attempt to capture or kill Jesse James.

The crowd was badly fooled.

The three horsemen came on with a rush.

Their reins hung loose on their saddle horns, a revolver was held in each hand.

Their spurs were pressed hard against the flanks of their horses, and the animals were straining forward to the utmost of their strength.

Suddenly a blaze of light shot up from the steamboat.

She was revealed hanging by one line, the gangplank run out and a crowd of men upon her lower deck.

The crew of the boat was armed.

Crouching in their midst was a bright glare of brass, mounted upon wheels.

It was a six-pound brass cannon.

It was a startling sight to the crowd, for it told the whole story.

Jesse James was not alone.

He had landed for a deeper purpose than to get the prize money of twenty thousand dollars for winning the fight against Maloney.

There had been method in his seeming madness.

It told that the three horsemen also were in league with him.

The steamboat was quivering with fiery energy from keel to pilothouse.

Its furnaces glared red-hot, and it was ready for flight.

The crowd stood as though one blow had been dealt in the face of every man.

The people saw all—the steamboat, the horsemen, the desperate man standing there in the full glare of light, were a revelation.

But it all dazed the crowd.

A moment more and the three horsemen reached Jesse James.

The man who had acted as watchman was not weighted down with booty, and he moved to the side of his chief.

The latter grasped the mane of his horse, and then with great bounds he was carried on toward the steamboat.

CHAPTER IX.

TO WALNUT POINT.

The three horsemen reached the steamboat.

Clinging to the mane of one of the horses was Jesse James.

His voice was answered as he called out:

"Stand by to cut away!"

The crowd had rallied. The mass of mad humanity was pressing forward with a rush and a roar.

The darkening of the boat from upper deck to lower brought all to a halt.

They had been tricked once, they dreaded a disastrous trick this time.

A few dead bodies, a few wounded men lay about here and there, unnoticed, uncared for.

It was the outlaw chief that was the object of attention just then.

The crowd longed for Jesse James.

He had been in their midst, yet had slipped through their fingers like an eel.

His courage, though in a dastard cause it might be, had won the admiration of the mob.

His pluck had saved his life.

And pressing forward, the crowd yet remained silent.

An impressive thing, indeed, is a vast, silent mass of humanity.

A few bold spirits broke the almost painful silence by shots.

They were aimed toward the boat in the dark river.

The horses were going aboard.

One by one, led by their riders, they were being led up the narrow, carpeted gangplank.

A shot from the shore entered the brain of one of the horses, and, bounding into the air, he dragged his master into the swiftly-swirling river with him.

There was a loud splash, and a deafening roar from the crowd.

It encouraged further shots from the mob ashore.

The horse was dead, and went down, and the man could not swim.

In an instant Jesse James had plunged into the river, with boots, hat, coat, all on, and grasped the drowning man.

"Throw me a rope!" he called.

It was done.

"Draw him aboard!"

It was done.

"Lend me your hand!" and the lifetaker and lifesaver was drawn aboard.

He had taken lives ashore, and he had saved a life—that of a comrade.

The gangplank had been drawn aboard, and the man with the hatchet crouched at the bowline, ready to cut it.

He awaited the order from the stern lips of the chief.

"Cut away the bowline!"

The order came sharp and stern.

A blow, and the boat moved back in the swift current.

"Ho! the pilothouse, there!"

"Ay, ay, sir."

"Set her ahead!"

"Ahead she goes, sir!"

"Crowd forward here, men, and show our bulldog!" came the next order.

The men obeyed, and the glittering gun was shoved to the front, as the crowd surged to the landing, revolvers cracking.

"Light her up!"

"Let them see us!" again came the stern order of the chief.

In an instant a dazzling light shot forth from the steamboat.

The searchlight was thrown upon the shore.

The crowd surged back as though the cannon had opened fire.

They saw the gleaming brass gun.

They saw the steamboat slowly back out, her stern pointed toward the other shore.

They stood in awed silence, watching the strange and silently thrilling scene.

Sternforemost the steamboat swung around until the bow pointed down stream.

A rattling of the bells in the engine-room followed,

distinctly heard by the silent crowd, and then the steamboat was suddenly lost in darkness.

Not a light appeared, and a darkly-moving mass of internal life, fire and danger, it began to rush onward to seek other scenes.

Then the crowd found its voice as one man.

There arose a mighty roar from a thousand lips.

Was it a groan of hated denunciation?

Or was it a cheer, bursting instinctively from the hearts of men for the grand pluck of the one man who had won the fight in the prize ring and then against the tremendous odds of a mob?

Who can tell? for human nature is as fickle as death.

An instant only of silence followed the wild outburst of voices, and then arose a cry ashore.

A voice shouted:

"Hunt down the man ashore!"

The cry was heard on the boat.

It told that the kidnaper was to be hunted down.

That he had a comrade in the rush with him for the boat had not been noticed, it seemed, or, if so, had been forgotten.

Jesse James had gone, all wet though he was, up to the pilothouse.

The boat's captain and pilot combined was there, hidden in the darkness.

He wanted no light to confuse him as to the dark shores of the river.

"You made it, chief," he said, giving the wheel a turn, and then holding out his hand in congratulation.

"Yes, through your good aid; but Frank, of course, arranged for his not getting aboard?"

"He did, and was to make for Walnut Point."

"Good! about six miles, is it not?"

"Ten by river, six by road."

"How is the road?"

"Just now, after the rains, bad for a wagon."

"And he has a wagon, and a girl in a faint to care for."

"A minute more and he would have made it to the boat."

"But he didn't make it, and I know he did his best, for he would not hurry if he lost a trimp, when he had a part to play in which seeming haste might give him away.

"I am sure he did his best."

"No doubt of it, chief, for he always does, and I guess he'll reach the Point all right."

"I hope so, for thus far things have gone our way, as the bankers drew out their money; we'll count it after we get Frank, his comrade and the girl."

"And not a life lost?"

"Not on our side; but a few among those who crowded us."

"Yes, I saw you at work, chief."

"Yes, I had to teach deadly lessons."

"And how did the prizefight pan out, sir?"

"I got the twenty thousand purse."

"And he was a terror?"

"He was dead easy; but I had to play for time, for the boys to do their work, and, as it was, I took none too long."

"No; they finished up about with you; but I never expected to see you again, chief."

"The devil takes care of his own," was the grim reply, with a bitter laugh from the stern lips.

"But are not those the lights of Walnut Point ahead there?"

"Yes, chief."

"Then we will soon know if that plot miscarries, Frank is to be hanged, or if it is to be more killing of human cattle thirsting for my blood?" and, with a bitter laugh, Jesse James turned his gaze upon the little river settlement of Walnut Point, where another tragedy was looked for.

CHAPTER X.

THE MISSING MAN.

Walnut Point was not a place for its citizens to be proud of.

It was a village of shanties, of houses scattered about upon hills sloping to the river, and with a range of mountains in the background.

Unlike most river towns, it had a wharf built out from the landing, and this remarkable enterprise on their part filled the hearts of its citizens with pride.

As the steamboat, the outlaw cruiser of Jesse James, approached the town, its houses were dark, save here and there only a light burning in a sick-room, or some early riser getting up to begin the toil of the day.

The town was, as a whole, enjoying its sweetest sleep just before dawn.

Daybreak was already lighting up the horizon over

the eastern hills, for the night had passed away during the thrilling scenes related and which the darkness had hidden.

Nearer and nearer drew the boat to the little wharf.

It was to make a landing, and, if the kidnaper and those with him were not there, then it must await their coming.

The people of Walnut Point would suspect no harm in the steamboat.

They must wait until word came by messenger from the scene of the prizefight in the town above.

At least, so thought Jesse James.

He stood outside of the pilothouse, cool, stern, determined, gazing upon the little hamlet as the boat drew nearer and nearer.

What his thoughts were none could tell.

His face was white, immovable.

He was ready for what was before him.

Suddenly he saw lights gleam here and there.

What could it mean?

Something had gone wrong beyond a doubt.

Had Frank arrived with the kidnaped girl, and her cries for help aroused the town to action?

Jesse James was as alert as a panther preparing for a spring.

But he said quietly to the pilot:

"Something is wrong there."

"It looks it."

"But we must find out."

"Will you land, chief?"

"Yes, round her to, and hang on by one line, while I go ashore."

"Not alone?"

"I must find out about Frank."

"Take half the crew with you."

"They can stand ready to come, or for me to retreat on," and Jesse James went below to the lower deck.

His men were grouped there, and ready.

All were watching for the ordeal that was to be met, whatever it might be.

Jesse James knew his men.

They were well-trained.

He had himself grown a little stiff and sore in the cool night air, and in his wet clothes, from the terrible blows of Maloney.

But, though he had not changed his wet clothes for dry, he had very quietly thrown the empty shells

out of his revolvers and replaced them with ball cartridges.

Thus prepared, he was ready for whatever might turn up.

The boat's bow had been swung round up-stream, and was slowly nearing the wharf.

A solitary man stood there, one to whom an incoming boat was a joy forever, enough to bring him from his bed at any hour in the night.

He would receive his reward if only he could make the line fast.

The joy was his, for the voice of Jesse James ordered:

"Catch the line, drag in the slack and make fast."

"I will sir," was the eager reply of the early-bird, hoping to be invited to the boat's bar to get an eye-opener.

Had he known that the terrible Jesse James had given the order, and that he was the man standing by the coil of rope on the boat, he would have sprung away from the line as from a rattlesnake.

But he did not look for the coil to hold a deadly sting, and he seized it, hauled in the slack with the energy of an old tramp working for a drink, and made the bowline fast.

Then he sprung forward to salute the "captain."

Just then shouts were heard up in the town.

Lights flashed here and there.

Then came the screams of women and children, and stern tones of men.

"What is all that row about in your sleepy town?" asked Jesse James of the early-bird.

"Dunno! Guess somebody's dead," was the reply.

"Somebody will be, if they are looking for trouble," and the stern man strode ashore as he spoke.

"Bring my horse!" he called out, as he reached the wharf, and he added:

"Half-a-dozen of you mount and come with me!"

The early-bird was scared. He was badly scared, and he forgot about his drink.

He struck away, with trembling knees, and tried to run like a deer up into the town for safety, while he told himself over and over again:

"Them's pirts! Them's pirts! I feels dey is; I knows it!"

But his knees were not up to the task of making

good speed—they only crooked, quivered and wobbled in fright.

Then down he went.

His legs refused to do further service, and he cried mournfully:

"Them pirlits will steal me!"

But a voice was heard now crying loudly:

"Men, follow me!"

"The telegram said it was Jesse James, with his outlaw band aboard the boat.

"Follow me, and we will take them, dead or alive.

"Come men, come!"

The loud cries of the man showed that he was either giving notice to Jesse James to escape before he and his heroes got there, or the crowd did not respond to his calls with any amazing haste to do and die for the honor of their town.

"They have got a line of wire to this town, chief," called down the pilot.

"So it seems," was the cool response.

Then came the words:

"But Frank is missing.

"He has not reached here yet, and we must stand them off until he comes."

"All right, sir."

The town was now ablaze with lights.

The news wired down from the town above had set the people afire with enthusiasm—all save the early-bird, who still lay in the mud, where he had fallen.

He was helpless with fright.

And so were others in the village, for being aroused from bed in the chill early morn is not conducive to courage unless a man has pluck to spare.

Then came shouts further up in the village.

Shots followed, a wild shout, and Jesse James cried:

"It is the missing man!

"Frank is coming.

"Men, mount and follow me, for we are needed yonder!"

Jesse James and his six mounted horsemen rode ashore, and dashed off the wharf, nearly riding over the early-bird, who rolled over with such haste that he kept on down the hill into the river.

He uttered a wild shriek at the plunge, for it was the first water he had used in years, and his terror at the thought enabled him to strike out blindly; his hand touched something, and he drew himself aboard the "pirate craft," scared, helpless.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FLIGHT OF THE KIDNAPER.

It was a critical moment for the daring kidnaper, who had so cleverly taken Cherrie Chase from her home, when he came in sight of safety for himself and comrade, and the successful termination of his bold exploit, to find that hundreds of maddened men cut him off in the very hour of his triumph.

He saw Jesse James standing alone before the fierce mob, but at bay, and ready to sell his life dearly.

He saw the boat ready to receive them; but between them and safety were crowds of men, many of them armed.

At first he desperately determined to dash through.

Though desperate, he was yet perfectly calm.

So calm was he that he tried to deceive the young girl he had kidnaped as to the motive of the mob, though he knew but too well.

The sight of Jesse James there, if nothing else, told him the cause of the trouble.

He quickly took in the situation, for and against him, as to whether he should risk breaking through or turn back.

But the climax came with his recognition by some one in the crowd.

To hesitate then was to lose life and all.

It told the story when his name welled forth in a cry from a hundred lips.

It told to Cherrie Chase how she had been deceived, and in whose power she was.

She had it flash upon her that her father had been the one to proclaim Jesse James an outlaw.

She knew that her father had put up his money in the price set upon the man's head.

She realized the truth—and fainted.

Whirling the horses to the right about, and laying the lash on, Frank called out with the utmost calmness to his comrade:

"Keep close, for it is a race for life now."

"I will be near when wanted," was the reply, in a merry tone, and the question followed:

"But the girl?"

"She has fainted; and she is not troublesome now."

"Will you desert her?"

"Not I."

"Were you hurt by the shots?"

"No; were you?"

"Not a bit."

"But are you sure the girl fainted?"

"Yes; why not?"

"Might not a bullet have pierced her brain or heart?"

"Great God!" and the man's calm manner was for the first time ruffled.

"I had not thought of that," he added, after a moment, and his manner was perfectly composed again.

"I cannot find out now, for I have to hold her and drive the team," and the horseman, on account of the narrowing of the road, dropped away from the side of the vehicle and followed on behind, still leading Frank's well-trained horse.

On dashed the team at terrific speed, held by a master hand in horsemanship.

The town was left behind now, the last house in the outskirts having been passed.

All was darkness, the trail leading through a heavy woodland and winding along a vale among hills.

But the horses were kept at their speed.

"There are horses in plenty in the town, and mounted men will soon be in pursuit, and they can travel faster than wheels along this rough road," called back Frank.

"Is she dead?" soon called out the horseman behind, in evident dread that such was the case.

"Heaven grant not, for I cannot war against women.

"But she is as still as death," was the answer.

So on the flight continued, until miles had been gone over.

The horses began to slow down, both from fatigue and the increasing roughness of the roads.

The horses drawing the vehicle were becoming more and more dead beat.

Seeing this, Frank called back:

"How are our animals standing the run?"

"All right—no trouble with them."

Frank made no reply, and began to dread himself that the girl was dead, killed instantly by one of the bullets sent after them by the mob.

Suddenly one of the horses stumbled badly, half recovered, and then went down, dragging his mate with him.

The pole snapped in two, the vehicle rolled upon

the struggling horses, a wheel was crushed, and the carriage went over.

Frank landed on his feet, and the girl was clasped firmly in his arms to prevent injury to her if she were alive.

The horseman behind drew up just in time to prevent dashing upon the wreck.

Placing the girl quickly upon the ground, Frank sprang to grasp the rein of his horse, which had got loose, and just then came the clatter of hoofs along the road behind them.

"They are coming. We must mount and rush on."

"And the girl?"

"By Heaven! there she goes!"

He saw that the motionless form had suddenly sprung into action.

Cherrie Chase had leaped to her feet, and was flying like a deer away from the spot.

"Come with my horse. 'I will catch her!'"

So cried Frank, and he was away like a race horse in pursuit.

It was a deep relief to feel that she was not dead, but very much alive.

But she must not escape him.

That he was determined upon.

He had risked much to kidnap her.

It was not for such as he to give her up.

There were pursuers upon his track, how many he knew not, but the resounding hoofbeats proclaimed a dozen or more.

But the girl must be retaken and carried in with him.

Walnut Point was yet a mile away.

The vehicle was wrecked, one of the horses, with broken leg, was down, the other struggling violently to free himself from the tangled harness.

But his own splendid horse and his mate's were there.

He would catch the flying girl, and carry her on with him.

An athlete, he ran with the speed of a hound and as tirelessly.

He came up with the girl in the dark timber, and said, with courteous manner:

"You must go with me, miss."

"It is so destined."

She turned upon him, and even in the darkness he saw her eyes glaring into his.

He did not know that in the fight in the wagon she had secretly slipped a revolver from his belt.

But she had done so—and she used it.

CHAPTER XII.

THE PROMISE.

The weapon held in the hand of Cherrie Chase was held up to the face of Frank, the kidnaper.

The trigger was pulled, and the flash and report followed.

But the hand of the girl, from the intense excitement and the hard run, was nerveless and quivering.

The hand jerked violently, and the muzzle of the revolver pointed to one side when the trigger was drawn upon.

The bullet whistled by Frank's ear.

It was a miss, but so close a one that the lead grazed the outlaw's cheek.

Caught off his guard by the act, taken by surprise as he was, Frank dragged the revolver from her hand before she could fire again, replaced it in his belt, and then said:

"Well intended, Miss Cherrie, but not successfully executed."

"Here, pard, bring my horse."

The man dashed up, and Frank swung Cherrie to a seat in his saddle, the girl now almost helpless.

Lightly he sprang to a seat behind her, and, supporting her by an arm on either side, he cried:

"They are almost upon us!

"We must push for our lives!"

Away bounded the two horses, side by side, sweeping out into the road just where the wrecked wagon was, and not a hundred yards ahead of their pursuers.

"That horse has a broken leg—I'll put him out of his misery."

As he dashed past, Frank drew a weapon and sent a bullet into the brain of the suffering brute, and never checked his speed.

The shot caused the pursuers to quickly draw rein.

They saw the flash, and supposed they were being shot at.

Frank heard their cries to halt, and laughed.

Then they dashed on the more rapidly, while shots rattled after them.

The horse carrying double weight ran along smoothly.

He did not seem to mind his burden.

"You are a remarkable man, Frank James," suddenly said Cherrie Chase.

"Why so, miss?"

"In many ways, for your capture of me was most clever, and you showed great anxiety about me when you feared I was dead."

"I felt it!"

"You did not flinch at my shot, and you showed a good heart in putting that poor brute out of his pain."

"There was no need for him to suffer, miss."

"Again, you sprung up behind me, to protect me from any shots those pursuers might fire."

"They are fools and cowards to fire when they know you are here."

"Granted; but they did fire, and but for you I would have been wounded."

"Ah! how do you know this?"

"I heard the thud of the bullet when it hit you—and felt you start."

"Is it serious?"

"It is a shot in the back, and I don't like that kind."

"I would rather face my foe."

"Is the wound serious?"

"I think not, for it hit me in the muscular part of my back, miss."

"And if it is serious?"

"It will save me from the hangman, doubtless," was the bitter reply.

"And why have you kidnapped me?"

"The chief will tell you when we reach the boat."

"Which you expect to do?"

"Why not?"

"There is a village to go through, and the boat may not be there."

"The plans were made with the chief, and will be so carried out."

"But there is the river at the foot of this long hill."

"And where are your pursuers?"

"They have stopped to consider," was the laughing reply of the remarkable man, whom Cherrie regarded more and more with wonder, not unmixed with admiration.

"The town seems to be awake, pard," called out Frank to his comrade, who was riding a few lengths in the rear.

"It's the first time, then, I ever knew it to be—must be a telegraph here now, for I noticed poles along the road."

"And there is the boat just heading in."

"Yes, the chief is on hand; but the town is really awake, as you said."

"We will put some of them to sleep if they attempt to check us," was the grim retort.

"Don't kill! they intend to do only their duty."

"I will go with you without trouble if you will not fire on them."

"And yet you sought to kill me a while since?"

"That was in self-defense."

"Yes, and this will be also in self-defense, and to save my prize."

"I will go with you without trouble, for I know I will only be held for ransom."

"Don't kill them."

"I will not—we'll get through without," was the decided response, and they rode on at increased speed, for the pursuers were now heard once more coming up behind them.

A few moments more and they were among the cluster of houses known as Walnut Point village.

The citizens, however, had their eyes on the river.

There the outlaw cruiser was seen just coming into the landing.

"We will dash through, pard," cried Frank, and he added:

"Don't handle your gun, for I have promised not to."

"You may not, but I'm not going to be shot down and not defend myself," was the sullen answer.

"Do as I tell you."

"If you draw a weapon, I will kill you!" was the stern threat as Frank spurred on, just when, with shouts, the pursuers came dashing down the hill, gaining courage with other help at hand.

CHAPTER XIII.

DRIVEN TO COVER.

A telegram had been sent from the town to Walnut Point, the operator working an hour at the key to get the man in the village awake.

He was told that Jesse James, on a bandit boat, had escaped from the town after knocking out Maloney in a prizefight, and killing numbers of men, to say nothing of robbing the bank of vast treasure and kidnaping the daughter of Judge Chase from her elegant home.

The village operator was so frightened he was unable, until he had taken sundry drinks of bad rum and got up some "Dutch courage," to go out of his office, which was also his home, and notify the citizens of the frightful news.

At last he did so, and like wildfire the startling tidings spread, gaining added rumors as it did so.

The men rallied to defend their homes, and when the boat was seen to be already at the wharf, they feared to go down and attack it.

While they were holding meetings to screw up their pluck, Jesse James had walked out on the wharf, the early-bird had fallen into the river, and Frank and the kidnaped Cherrie were nearing the village.

Then came the shots fired upon the hill, as the pursuers of the kidnaper came in sight of the village, and wished to come in with a bluff of great courage.

These shots Jesse James had heard, and he at once felt that Frank needed his aid.

He was not the man to hang back when wanted, and so he called his half-dozen horsemen about him and charged along the wharf and up into the town, a revolver in each hand, and demoniacal yells breaking from his lips.

The citizens heard the clatter of the hoofs, the wild yells, and promptly ran into the nearest houses.

They were afraid that they would attract attention to themselves by being found in the streets.

They were literally scared silly, and even the dogs in the village quit barking, stuck their tails between their legs and crawled into the nearest holes.

The name of the "James Boys" was terrible enough in that country to quickly stampede a church meeting.

And up the village street rushed Jesse James and his horsemen, ready for bloody work.

And down into the village came Frank, riding behind the girl he had kidnaped.

Down the hill came the people from the town, until they heard in a loud voice:

"Jesse James, is that you?"

"Ay, ay, Frank!"

"Is all well?"

"Then the pursuers were in turn pursued, but by their fears alone, for they turned and fled back up the hill, confident that Jesse James and his outlaws were about to clean out the town.

"Back to the boat, Jesse, for we are pursued!" cried Frank.

"No danger here, boy; the town has awoke, but it has gone back to bed again," and Jesse James raised his hat politely, as he wheeled his horse by the side of Frank and said:

"Pardon seeming rudeness, Miss Chase, but have no fear of us."

"I am not afraid—curs," was the girl's reply.

"Had a hard time of it, I take it, Frank," continued Jesse James.

"Oh, no! only rapid driving and a smash-up, but no one hurt.

"I transferred Miss Chase to my saddle, and my pard has her satchel; but where are the people?"

"Gone to bed—or hid—for they have even put the lights out; but daylight is at hand, I see.

"Come!" and with a chorus of wild yells and the rattling of revolvers the party started forward at a gallop.

"I do not think you will have a chance to break your promise, sir, not to kill any of the inhabitants," said Cherrie Chase, with a smile of derision, while she added:

"What cowards some men can be!"

"It seems so, miss," and Frank called to his com-

rade to ride on ahead and take Miss Chase's satchel up to the stateroom prepared for her.

"Then you seemed very sure of capturing me, sir?" said Cherrie.

"Not too sure, as it turned out," was the answer.

A minute more and they had reached the wharf, where Frank dismounted, aiding Cherrie to do so, and keeping very close to her, as he had not forgotten that she could run like a deer.

He led her up the gangplank and to the cabin on the main deck, to her stateroom, and said:

"I would advise you to seek rest, Miss Chase, for you need it, and you will be perfectly safe here."

"Thank you; I will take your word for it—outlaw though you are," answered the plucky girl.

The man raised his hat and returned to the lower deck.

The horses had been led aboard and stabled, and the day had dawned.

The villagers, now confident that they had given the outlaws a terrible scare and driven them off, thus saving their lives and their homes from destruction, crowded down to the wharf, firing revolvers, rifles and shotguns and shouting vengeance.

"Cast off!" had come the order from Jesse James, and, as the boat began to back, the men ashore turned their weapons upon the crew.

It was a mistake.

Springing toward the bow, Jesse James ordered the brass cannon to be run into position, and, as it appeared before the startled gaze of the crowd, all heard his clear, threatening voice:

"Back to your kennels, every cowardly cur of you, or I'll smash your town to atoms!"

Then men aimed rifles at the daring man; but they were not fired, for in dismay they turned and stampeded back to shelter, while a wild wail came from aft on the lower deck:

"Oh! capting! don't take me off on your pirit cruiser!"

It was the wail of the early-bird, who had crept out of his hiding-place.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE NIGHT'S BOOTY.

The wharf was cleared of men thirsting for gore, for the terrible threat of Jesse James had scared each and every one, as their humble homes were as dear to them as the rich man's palace is to him.

The crew of the steamboat laughed loudly at the flight of the crowd, and then at the wail of the early-bird, who was half-scared out of his wits at being carried off by the outlaw cruiser.

"I will land you below, my man, and give you a helping hand, for you look as though you have troubles of your own," said Jesse James, and one of the men remarked:

"That means that the chief will kill him, for he will be generous in what he gives him, and the old soak will drink himself to death."

Soon after getting out of sight of the town, the early-bird was put ashore, happy, indeed, and jingling a lot of silver dollars in his pocket.

He waved a tearful farewell to Jesse James as he landed, and then set off at a trot for the village.

After breakfast, Jesse James called Frank and the under officers of the band to the cabin, and placed on the table his satchel, containing the prize ring money.

"There are twenty thousand in good money, men, and it goes in with to-night's booty.

"Now, what did the bank pan out?" he said.

"Here it all is in the bags, just as taken," was the answer.

"And every dollar was stolen from poor people, as I well know Skinner & Co.'s deals in business.

"They get their money without risk.

"Count the bills, Frank, and I'll run over the gold."

This duty took some little time, and it was found that the paper money ran up to thirty thousand dollars and the gold to ten thousand dollars.

"Not a bad night's work; but we have another revenue."

"What other, chief?"

"The girl."

"Ah!" came in a chorus of voices.

"Her father outlawed us, and also branded me with a price on my head.

"That price for me, dead or alive, amounts to fifteen thousand dollars, and that is just the sum Judge Chase must pay to ransom his daughter," said Jesse James, sternly.

"And it shall be paid, sir—I pledge my word to it," was said in the clear voice of Cherrie Chase, as she appeared in the door of her stateroom, gazing upon the crew.

She was pale, looked haggard—yet was bright and a little defiant in manner.

All rose from the table, and off came their hats.

The chief set the example of politeness to a lady.

Turning to her, then, Jesse James said:

"Miss Chase, we outlaws must live, and, though hunted down like wild beasts, no one considers who and what drove us to the wretched, wicked lives.

"But we dodge the gallows, and continue our work, while it is with us your money or your life.

"Thus far, however, we make war on the rich, not the poor, and we regret having given you alarm, worry and inconvenience.

"But your father would hang me and any one of my band, and though I could, with you in my power, hit him hard, I will rely upon your pledge, and another you must make, and let you go, landing you at a point down the river, where you can catch a train to the city and meet your father.

"From him you can get the ransom money I demand, turn it over to the one who shall be your escort, and the deed is done.

"The other pledge that I ask is that you will not betray the man I trust to go with you to the city, and arrange with him how and when you are to pay to him the money."

"I will make both pledges, sir, and you may rely upon me that they will be kept, for, if my father, seeing me safe, refuses to pay the money, I have a

bank account of my own upon which I will draw and turn it over to your representative.

"Will he be the one who kidnaped me from my home, may I ask?" and Cherrie glanced toward Frank.

"He is too well known, miss, and——"

"I will put trust in Miss Chase, and take the risk," said Frank, quietly.

"You know how great are the risks," said Jesse.

"I will take them, for, having kidnaped Miss Chase from her home, I deem it my duty to restore her in safety," was the answer.

And so it was settled, after which Cherrie Chase was given a tempting breakfast.

She went on deck, to discover that many changes had been made in the outward appearance of the steamboat, while she was surprised to see what looked like women pacing to and fro. But they were the outlaws dressed up in female attire to give a peaceful look to the craft.

The name, too, had been changed to that of a down-river boat, and so it was that the steamboat of the outlaws was masquerading as a peaceful river steamer.

About noon a steamboat was met coming up, and the pilot slowed up, and called out:

"Seen anything of the James boys' outlaw boat?"

"She ran into a creek above, and they burned her," answered Jesse James, and his report was received with a cheer from those on the other boat, the pilot blowing his whistle and ringing his bell as he passed on.

Soon after, the outlaw cruiser landed at a town, and Frank and Miss Chase were put ashore to catch a train.

Then the boat continued on its way, those on the banks little dreaming what it really was, for, to questions about the outlaw cruiser being seen above, Jesse James returned the same answer:

"The outlaws landed and burned her."

From that point on, the boat made landings, not at river towns, however, and a horseman would ride

ashore, well supplied with his share of the night-raiders' booty, at each stop.

By night, only enough remained on the outlaw cruiser to man it, and at the next turn, it crept into a retreat without attracting attention, the lights were put out and the last one of the crew left the river craft that had become a lawless, outlawed cruiser, and, in the hands of Jesse James, had so well served his purpose of greed for gold and deviltry.

CHAPTER XV.

CONCLUSION.

The outlaw escort of Cherrie Chase from the little river town where they took the railroad to the city had every appearance of being a gentleman.

He did not look the bold robber, the daring highwayman, the clever kidnaper—all of which he had proven himself.

He bought the tickets, carried Cherrie's satchel, secured a good seat for her and got some reading matter to entertain her, while he took a seat apart from her, not to force his company upon her.

Arriving at the city just after dark, he took her in a carriage to the hotel where her father was stopping, and said:

"Miss Chase, my life is in your hands, for I shall register at the same hotel and under the name of James Franklin.

"I shall keep to my room, and you can call a servant and send him with a note when you are ready to keep your pledge about your ransom.

"I suppose it is useless for me to say that you alone must know of my presence in the hotel, or the city, and it will be well for you to lead to the belief that you are to deliver the ransom money at another time and place.

"If you wish to see me hanged, it is in your power to bring me to justice by betraying me, but I accepted your pledge, made in good faith, I am here and I will trust you."

"You may do so, and I thank you for your gentlemanly treatment of me, sir, and I beg that you will give up this life of an outlaw."

"Too late! too late!" he said, and then added:

"Remember the name, James Franklin, Missouri, and a bellboy will tell you the number of my room."

"I will first drive elsewhere before I go to the hotel, and pardon me if I do not aid you," he said, as the hotel was reached.

Ten minutes after, Cherrie Chase was with her father, to whom she had telegraphed of her safety and coming to the city.

The judge welcomed her with great joy and emotion, for she was his idol, but when he learned what she had promised Jesse James he swore and stormed like a madman.

"Very well father; as you do not consider my pledge binding because made to an outlaw, I shall have to keep my promise good to return to their power, for my word is sacred to me, no matter how or to whom made!" was the clever bluff of the brave girl.

This threat brought the old man to terms, and he promised to give the money, while he added:

"I shall also double the price on the head of Jesse James."

"But when must this be paid?"

"I want the money in bills as soon as the bank opens in the morning."

"All right, I will have it here; but when am I to pay it?"

"I am to do that, sir."

"When and where?"

"In my own time and place, for I shall not betray the man who trusted me."

"And I am to allow you to do this, and not catch that fellow?"

"You are to allow me to do as I have promised, or I must return to durance vile, and more, if you attempt to capture that man while my pledge to him lasts, I will act as I deem my duty in the matter."

"We may as well understand each other, father,

for I shall pay the money from my own fortune, left me by my mother, if you do not care to invest that sum for your daughter's safety; but I must have the money in the morning, though it be a month before I can pay it."

This was added to throw the judge off the scent as to where and when it was to be paid.

That settled it with the judge, for the money was drawn from the bank the next morning and given to Cherrie, who watched her chance, knocked at room thirteen on the same floor as her own and was met by Frank.

"This keeps my pledge, sir, for the money is the sum demanded, as I counted it."

"Now, I advise you to make your escape from the city; but first write me a receipt for the ransom money paid you."

He did so, and she folded it and said:

"I feel now that I have a great weight lifted from my heart and mind, as no longer am I responsible for the life of a man—though an outlaw."

"Good-by, and I shall hope to see that you have given up the life of outlawry you lead and are not hanged."

He bowed, and she left the room.

An hour after, he calmly walked up to the hotel office, settled his bill and left, passing Judge Chase on his way to a hack.

Two days after, he was at the secret retreat of the James boys, and his duty was done.

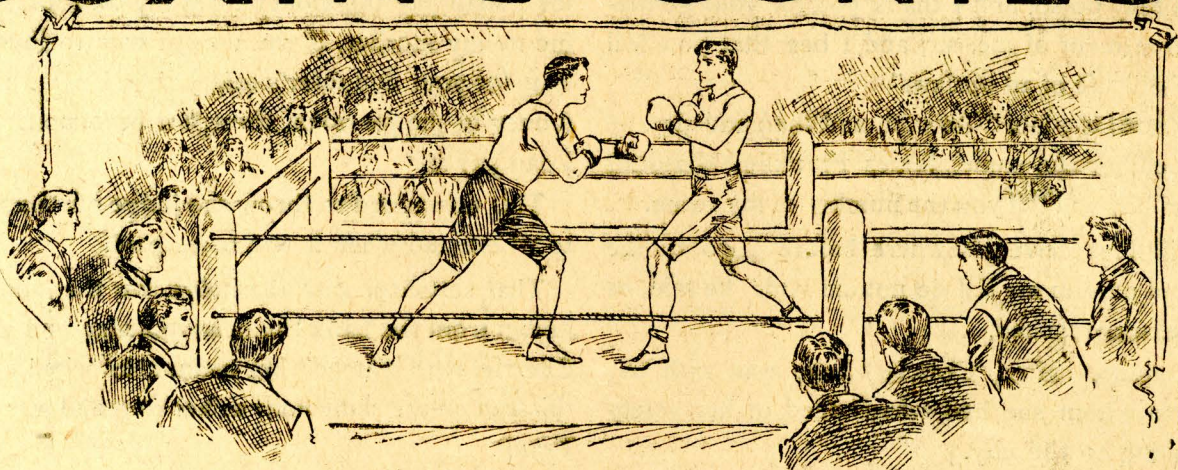
But the wicked and daring deeds of Jesse James and his men did not end, as Cherrie Chase had hoped and prayed they would.

There was more game for them to hunt, and they hunted it.

THE END.

Next week's issue (No. 49) will contain "Jesse James' Jubilee; or, The Celebration at the Bandit's Castle." After the success of his last adventure, the James boys thought that a jubilee would be in order. They had one, but there was more excitement in it than they had bargained for.

BOXING CONTEST



Push it along, boys; it's a great contest. Just what we predicted—an immense success. Get right into it if you're not in it already. Full particulars on page 29.

A Hot Boxing Contest.

(By Arnold Burrage, Ohio.)

Principals.—George Harris and Benny Salters.

Class.—Featherweights.

Referee.—Frank Daniels.

Timekeeper.—For club, Ed. Snow.

Club.—Orange Athletic Club.

Purse.—\$500.

9:12.—Opera House crowded.

9:15.—Sign S. R. O. hung out.

9:16.—Preliminaries over.

9:17.—Salters and seconds enter.

9:20.—Harris and seconds enter.

9:24.—Referee announces contest.

9:27.—Men given gloves.

9:29.—They shake hands.

Round I.—Harris swings left for head. Salters ducks and sends right to kidneys. Harris again leads with left for head, which Salters blocks, countering on Harris' jaw, sending him to ropes. Salters receives an easy right on face and sends three right to heart. He then leaders right for face, but Harris side steps and lands right on Salter's ribs. Gong.

Round II.—Salters opens with right swing for head. Harris ducks, sends right to wind. Harris uppercuts Salters with right and left. Salters clinches.

On the breakaway, Harris sends right to jaw. They clinch, but are separated as gong rings. Salters groggy.

Round III.—Salters misses a left for head, and is jarred by right on jaw. Salters puts left to Harris' nose, starting blood. He then uppercuts Harris with left, following with a right over heart. Harris comes back with a strong right on jaw, but is sent to the ropes by a terrific left swing. They clinch as gong rings.

Round IV.—Salters is favorite, 5 to 1.

Salters ducks inside of left swing, sending right to heart. Harris goes to rope from left swing. They clinch. Harris jabs right and left to face, sending Salters to his corner. Salters comes back with right to kidneys, receiving a light tap on jaw. A mixup follows. Harris

falls. Helped to his feet by Salters. They break from clinch. Salters sends right to heart. Harris staggers. Salters closes in and puts a fearful left to jaw, which puts Harris down and out.

Time of round—2 min. 19 sec.

Winner.—Salters.

Harris revives in six minutes and is taken care of by seconds.

The Gay-Cool Boxing Match.

(By Raymond Poelecka, Minn.)

Round I. (Time, 3:30 p. m.).—Both came up and Gay tried left and sent right to jaw and got the clinch. In a mixup both landed often and closed again in a clinch.

Gay led again with his right, landing on the shoulder and Cool landed a hard right over the heart, sending Gay staggering back. But Gay came up with right and left, and the round ended in a warm mixup.

Round II.—Cool rushed in with left to body and clinched, then there was a rapid exchange of blows. Gay was on the defensive and met Cool's rushes with right blows and straight left jabs. Gay then led and lightly landed with the left. With a left hand uppercut Cool sent Gay to the floor.

Gay took a few seconds and came up perfectly mad and rushed in swinging right and left, throwing science to the air. Gay steadily retreated across the ring.

Round III.—Gay was hooked around the neck with the left. Gay complained of a foul. Gay planted right and left to the face and then rushed, landing on the head. The boys then fought close. Cool landed on Gay's face. Cool then blocked Gay's straight left. This was evidently Cool's round.

Round IV.—Gay wore a distressed expression when he came up, but he sent in a straight-arm blow which was blocked. He then landed a light punch to the jaw, and a swift left to the ribs. Cool then retreated and ducked steadily and Gay followed and hit Cool under the chin with his right. The men then began to wrestle. The round finished in Gay's favor.

Round V.—The men came up swift and heavy and Gay shot out right and left but both were blocked. Cool retreated and finally landed one to the ear. Cool then rushed and landed two body blows. Gay again complained of a foul. Gay then fought low and retreated around the ring ducking a low jab for the face. Cool then landed two more body blows.

Round VI.—Cool fought low and Gay looked for a chance to land a knockout. Cool shot an ineffectual left. Gay then rushed in whaling Cool right and left. Cool went down, but got up and rushed, but was forced back. The men closed in several times. With a left-hand uppercut Cool went down. He got up groggy as the round ended.

Round VII.—Cool was slow on leads, and Gay bore him to his corner with a left swing in the eye. Cool came up with a right on the body. Gay landed a straight arm on the shoulder. He then sent a straight right over the heart. Cool then attempted to retaliate, but was blocked. Cool rushed swinging right and left, and forced Gay back with a few lefts on the face. Gay mustered up courage and forced Cool back across the ring. There was positively no guarding on Cool's part, and Gay landed a heavy right uppercut on the chin, knocking Cool out entirely.

A Clever Punch.

(By Wm. F. Korth, N. Y.)

In the vicinity of my house lived a great many expert boxers. The one that I think is about the best is James Burke and another about equal to him is Harry Gribbon.

They are both expert boxers, and one day they were anxious to see who was champion, so they set a day apart on which they would fight. The day came.

They both were strong and healthy, so they went down into my cellar and started the fight. The first round Harry did very well. He hit James a blow in the stomach that nearly sent him off his feet.

The second round Harry got hit in the left eye, which nearly closed it. James also got hit in the jaw, which was not so bad.

The third round James did fine work, he let on all his points and fooled Harry very easily. Harry was getting weak when James gave him an uppercut which knocked Harry out.

James has been the champion ever since.

A Five-Round Contest.

On a lonely street of Allegheny City, in the State of Pennsylvania, stood a clubhouse in which about twenty young men kept themselves very comfortable, played cards and made themselves happy after a day of hard work.

Now, these boys were all very much interested in boxing, and all liked to see a lively fight. On the night of January 22, 1902, they held a meeting and voted for the two strongest boys to have a friendly boxing match. The one boy whose name was Edward Vidt, was heavy, strong and had arms of powerful strength, and the other, whose name was Harry Williams, was also strong and heavy. This fight was to take place on the 30th day of

January, 1902. And was to be fought for \$30, which was donated to the club by two Allegheny hotel keepers.

A couple of days before the fight the boys spent at hard work. On the day the fight was to take place the boys were all ready. When evening came there were fully seventy-five spectators there. At quarter of eight when the boys entered the ring a cheer and clapping of hands arose from the spectators, and at eight o'clock the signal was given to fight. Edward began with his right hand pounding Harry on the head, and then a clinch followed.

The referee had trouble separating the boys. Harry landed his left hand on Edward's head, and Ed put right and left to Harry's face in succession, which sent Harry staggering. Ed planted Harry a fierce blow just as the gong sounded. This was Ed's round. Ed landed on the jaw, and the boys clinched. They began fighting savagely with short-arm blows. Harry put left to Ed's mouth. Ed led with right, but fell short, getting Harry's right in stomach and clinching again. Ed began with left, landing blows to Harry's face, which sent him staggering.

At the end of the round Harry was tiring.

Ed rushed, landing right on stomach and left on face. A clinch followed. Ed received a hard short half arm jolt on the nose from Harry's left, a clinch followed.

Harry gave Ed an uppercut at the breakaway. Ed put right to Harry's jaw at the end of the round.

Ed swung with right and missed. Ed pounded Harry's nose with left. They clinched and Ed hit Harry's eye.

Harry put straight right on Ed's mouth and got straight right from Ed and wrestled him to the ropes. Harry uppercut with right and got a bad left hander on the jaw at the end of the round.

Ed rushed, but was blocked, and Harry clinched. Ed rushed again, putting left to the nose and sending Harry to the ropes. Harry tried to put right to Ed's face, but was very weak. Ed put right on Harry's nose and left on the ear, sending Harry to the floor.

He could not get up before the referee counted ten. So Edward was the winner, and the crowd went cheering home. Ed received the \$30, giving Harry \$5. They both went home and slept well the rest of the night.

Defending His Honor.

(By John Tracy, Jr., R. I.)

Jack Simpson had only been two weeks at Riverdale Academy when he was informed that Jim Bowers, the bully of the school, was casting insulting remarks about him.

Jack paid no attention to Bowers' actions until one day Jim called him a coward and hit him in the face. Jack replied with a left-hand swing on Bowers' jaw which knocked him down.

The arrival of the teachers upon the scene prevented further strife for a time. Upon learning the cause of the quarrel, and knowing that the combatants would have it out in spite of all, they agreed to a boxing contest of ten rounds. The ring constructed, the gloves brought, and the signal given, the boys were at it, "hammer and tongs."

Round I.—After sparring for a while Bowers rushed at

Jack, hitting him on the jaw, and sending him to his knees. In a second Jack was on his feet again. Side stepping a rush which Bowers made, he hit him on the wind, and following him up, swung heavily on the nose, causing blood to flow.

Round II.—Both boys were more cautious, Bowers doing all the rushing, Simpson acting only on the defensive.

Round III.—Simpson started in with a right hook on Bowers' jaw. Bowers rushed at Jack, who ducked and sent in a clever uppercut. Both clinched, and in breaking away Jack received a blow on the stomach. Both spar and exchange blows.

Round IV.—Bowers blocked a right-hand swing and sent in a left one on Jack's eye. Jack feinted for the face and sent in a right-hand counter on the stomach. They clinched, and in breaking away Jack hit Bowers under the ear and staggered him.

Round V.—Both boys do some fierce fighting. Jack swung heavily on Bowers' chin, knocking him down. Bowers jumped on his feet and rushed wildly at Jack, hitting him on the neck and staggering him.

Round VI.—Both boys exhausted. After sparring for a time, Bowers delivered several body blows and then clinched. After breaking away Bowers rushed, and Jack, blocking the blows, hit him on the ear.

Round VII.—Jack hit Bowers on the eye and Bowers rushed. Sidestepping, Jack delivered a right-hand counter on the jaw, closely followed by a left on the chin which knocked him down. Bowers jumped on his feet again, but Jack was there to meet him. Feinting for the face, he delivered a full swing on Bowers' wind, which staggered him.

Taking advantage of this opening Jack delivered two heavy blows on Bowers' ear, sending him to the ground. He was unable to rise within the time limit, so the victory was awarded to Simpson.

Ever afterward Jack Simpson was honored and respected by his classmates, and never again was he obliged to resent an insult.

A Six-Round Mix-up.

(By Roy Schroeder, Ind.)

This mix up came off on the last Friday night of January, 1902. It was between a friend of mine, whom we will call F. K., and myself, who will be known during the mix up by the letters R. S. The night that it came off we had a good-sized crowd at the place where it came off. The following are the rounds:

Round I.—F. K. led off with a rush, but was met with a left in the wind. F. K. puts left to jaw and right to breast. R. S. returned the blows; clinch, with a clean breakaway. R. S. made whirl swing and landed three straight blows in succession. F. K. returned with a left swing to breast, but was paid by getting a right in wind. Gong sounded and round ended. One minute's rest.

Round II.—Both rushed and met in center of floor, where a couple of blows were exchanged, then a clinch. This round ended without any results.

Round III.—Was fast but did not have any results.

Round IV.—R. S. led off with a blow to the head of

F. K. which made him stagger, and R. S. followed it up with right to jaw and left to wind, which put him to his knees, and the referee, who was a greenhorn, separated us. F. K. gave R. S. an uppercut, which landed on the jaw and made him stagger. This made R. S. mad, and he knocked F. K. on his back. Round ended and both were pretty tired.

Round V.—F. K. led off with a half-arm jolt to jaw of R. S. which made him stagger. R. S. returned with a short jab with left to jaw and a right swing to breast. Clinch separated, two or three blows exchanged and another clinch. This round ended with six clinches against us.

Round VI.—Both tired. R. S. led off with a straight jab which was parried.

F. K. sent in a left swing which was dodged by R. S. This round continued until three seconds were left, when each one of us landed at the same time, and both went to the floor.

This was called a draw, and we divided the money evenly. There were two or three more bouts that evening, but they did not go by rounds.

This is the size, age and weight of both:

R. S., fifteen years of age; five feet nine inches high; weight, 137 pounds.

F. K., eighteen years of age, weight, 140; height, five feet eight inches.

At the West End Athletic Club.

(By Clinely P. Miller, Va.)

It is now eight o'clock and the gymnasium room of the West End Athletic Club is the scene of activity. At nine o'clock the quarterly boxing bout between Kid McDonald and Sport Lewis is to take place. Here and there are gathered groups of members, telling each other the merits of their favorite. Word is quickly passed that the two contestants have arrived, and both seem to be in "the pink of condition."

The referee announces that it is going to be a bout of ten rounds. The Sport weighs at 110 pounds, while the Kid tips the beam at 108. The gong rings. Both advance to the center of the ring and shake hands. The Kid seems jubilant, while there is a smile of confidence on the Sport's face.

Round I.—The Kid leads off with a feint blow on head with left which the Sport parries and lands easily with left to shoulder. The Kid again feints to head with left and lands his right with terrific force to the Sport's jaw. Sport braces up and jabs the Kid on left wind twice in succession. The gong rings and Round I is ended.

Round II.—Both advance smiling. Sport leads off with right and taps the Kid lightly on left cheek. The Kid places his left on the Sport's jaw. The Kid makes a feint blow to head which the Sport ducks and uppercuts the Kid on the chin and draws his first blood. The Sport again places his right on the Kid's face.

The Kid retaliates with a left hook to the Sport's nose and the Kid has drawn his first blood. The gong rings and comes to the Sport's rescue, who seems dazed. This is the prettiest round of the contest.

Round III.—Sport taps the Kid on the face twice is

succession. The Kid leads off to body with right which the Sport sidesteps.

He lands on the Kid's body with right. The Sport shows decidedly the best footwork and seems eager to fight.

Kid leads off with right, but fails to connect. Clinches. In the breakaway the Sport lands on the Kid's body with a terrific "rib roaster."

The Sport tries a right swing for the Kid's wind, but fails. The Kid leads for head, but the Sport ducks and smashes the Kid on right cheek. The Sport leads for head with right, which the Kid sidesteps. He lands on the Sport's chin with a terrific right hook, which sends the Sport reeling to the floor. The referee counts the seconds and the Sport is unable to rise.

The Kid is the winner of the championship belt of the West End Athletic Club.

Won in the Second Round.

(By Homer Martin, Mo.)

Jack Young belonged to the athletic club of Chitwood, Mo. He was an all-round athlete, but boxing was his favorite sport. The neighboring village, Central City, had what they thought a good boxing club. The presidents of both clubs met on Friday to decide between a footrace and a boxing match.

Both clubs preferred a boxing match, for each thought that it would be an easy victory for them.

It was decided to have a boxing match Saturday night. Next morning the following poster was hung up in the post office:

NOTICE!

There will be a boxing match between Jack Young of Chitwood, Mo., and Fred More of Central City, Mo., at 7:30 this evening. Everybody invited.

That night the boys began to crowd into an old mill to watch the fight. I was to act as second for Jack Young. He came over in his corner where I was with a look of confidence on his face.

I said to Jack:

"You must not get mad, but try to get him mad; then he will drop his guard. Then step in and let him have one."

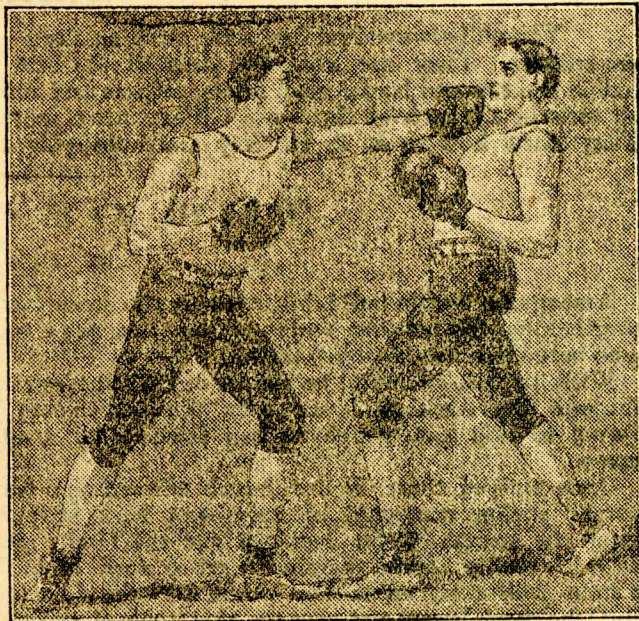
He promised that he would. The referee called time and the fight was on.

Jack had plenty of courage. He thought of his friend's words and decided to follow his advice. Fred opened it by making a rush at Jack. Although Jack avoided most all of the blows, he was driven near the rope, when he gave Fred a jab in the face that sent him staggering all around the ring.

When he recovered he rushed at Jack like a mad bull, but Jack got out of his way and planted a stunning blow over the heart. Fred was knocked down. He was rising to his knees when the referee's whistle sounded. The next round Jack started by giving his opponent an uppercut on the jaw. Fred was about to fall, but staggered till he caught the ropes. Jack saw his chance, and rushed at him and rained blow after blow in the face and ribs. He sank to the floor in an unconscious condition. He was down and out.

Jack had won the battle in the second round. How the boys of Chitwood did roar.

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THE DEATH-ROCK.

By DUKE CULVER.

Among the first to build his cabin on the steep bank overlooking the smiling valley of the Saco was a man who bore the name of Luke Garland.

With his wife and child he had made the long journey through the trackless forest, from the settlements at Dover to this spot, which he had selected for a new home.

Once arrived there, he had hastily thrown up a temporary shelter, composed of rocks and bark stripped from the trunks of the hemlock and the birch; and, with his family housed therein, he set to work to build a stout, substantial cabin that would defy the elements, and the wild beasts and savages that roamed through the forest.

It was the work of weeks to finish it to his mind; but at last it was completed, much to his pride and satisfaction, and they took up their abode therein.

This done, he turned his attention to the forest below the bank on which his new home stood, with the determination of getting as large a spot cleared as possible, for the reception of seed the ensuing spring. Until then he had to depend upon his rifle alone to provide the food necessary for their sustenance.

But this was an easy task. The forest and mountains abounded in game, and, when he went forth in quest of it, he never returned empty-handed.

For a couple of months after they had become settled in their new home, all went well with them.

Luke's wife, who had at first felt timid at being so far removed from neighbors, got over this in a great measure, and became contented with her new home.

Now and then a party of redskins would make their appearance at the cabin, causing a momentary sensation of fear; but as they appeared peaceably inclined, this feeling soon passed off.

The cabin stood almost upon the trail that led through the Great Notch to the regions beyond, and it was owing to this fact that it had so many visits from the red men.

Luke Garland always treated them with courtesy, and, when food was plenty in the cabin, they never went away hungry.

Thus the summer passed, and the early autumn days were upon them. Already the maples on the sides of the mountains had donned their robes of crimson and gold, and high on the topmost bluffs the snow-white tracks of winter became visible.

One day the settler took his rifle and plunged into the forest in search of a new supply of food. He was not so lucky as was his wont, and when at last he started a deer his ill luck pursued him, for instead of his bullet

bringing the game down it only inflicted a wound, and the deer bounded swiftly away through the forest.

Hastily reloading his rifle, Luke followed swiftly along the bloody trail. From the amount of blood the creature was losing he felt sure that it could not run far before it would sink to the earth. But he had miscalculated the strength of the animal, which led him over nearly a mile of ground before he came upon it, lying dead in its tracks.

Throwing the carcass across his shoulder he lost no time in turning his footsteps homeward.

For something like an hour he kept steadily on his way, and then his course took him across the Indian trail of which we have before spoken. Standing upon it he hesitated for a moment which way to take. To follow it would make the distance home a little greater; but then he knew that the way was smoother, and this was of some consequence considering the burden he bore.

He decided to take the trail, and without further loss of time hurried onward, but had gone hardly a dozen rods before he paused abruptly. Casting his eyes down at his feet, as it were, by chance, he had seen something that had instantly brought him to a standstill. It was the imprint of a woman's foot in the soft earth.

For an instant he stood as motionless as though made of stone, gazing upon it. He knew as well as though he had seen her leave it there, that it was his wife's.

It had been made but a short time, and along with it were those of a number of savages.

In another instant the truth had forced itself upon his mind—his wife was being carried off by the Indians. Perchance his child had been murdered, and his cabin given to the flames. The thought chilled his blood, and made his heart stand still. But it was only for a moment that this spell was upon him. The next he had cast it off with the burden he bore.

With a thud the carcass of the deer struck upon the earth, and an instant after Luke was bounding along the trail, with but one thought in his mind—to rescue his wife and avenge himself upon her captors. This he would do, or lose his own life in the attempt.

Darkness at length came, but this did not impede his movement in any great degree. Thanks to his knowledge of that section, he did not go astray. Nearly all the time he was upon the trail, although the darkness was so dense that he saw it not.

It was well on toward midnight when he saw a sign which told him that he was close upon those he sought. The light of a campfire shone before him in the darkness, and his heart gave a quick throb of joy and hope.

The moment for which he had longed was close at hand. With cautious footsteps he approached the spot from whence the light proceeded.

Nearer and nearer he drew, until at length he was so close that he could see plainly the situation of affairs before him.

The redskins, six in number, had built their campfire close up to the foot of a steep cliff, and were huddled close about it.

A little apart from them lay his wife upon the earth, her limbs bound so that she could not rise. Her babe was upon her breast, and it was its cries that had called his attention to the spot where they lay half-hidden in the darkness.

For a few minutes he did not move from his tracks, but stood trying to devise a plan by which they might be rescued with little risk to themselves.

By chance he cast his eyes to the summit of the cliff, and in an instant he saw a means by which he thought he might compass the destruction of the savages.

A huge boulder, which hung above the very spot where they were huddled together about the fire, looked as though a very slight effort would send it crashing down upon them.

His wife and child were so far removed from the spot that they would be in no danger.

Hastily he decided to test the plan suggested, and

retracing his steps a little, he clambered to the summit of the cliff. Approaching the boulder he glanced below.

The savages were in the same position as he had left them. Could he but send it down upon their heads there was no chance for one of them to escape.

Laying down his rifle, he brought all his strength to bear upon the rock, which was so nicely balanced that it moved slowly from its bed. Straining every nerve, he finally sent it to the edge, and then, as though possessed of life, it bounded over and went crashing down upon the doomed savages below.

There was no time for a sound to escape their lips; but a wild, startled cry came from those of the captive wife. With a joyful shout, Luke answered it, and then hastily descended to her side.

He cast a single glance in passing at the spot where the boulder lay, and saw that it had done its work well—every one of the savages had been crushed to death.

With heartfelt joy, Luke set his wife at liberty, and then, without loss of time, they started back for their cabin, which the redskins had spared from the flames. The cliff was called the Death-Rock, and that name it bears to this day.



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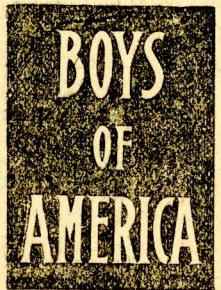
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